

# Crime rate slips down at University

## But thieves hit students at least once while here

By Debbie Howlett  
Of the Emerald

Crime at major colleges and universities around the nation is up almost 150 percent, says Sgt. Rick Allison of the Eugene Police Department. But at this University, Allison says he is observing a decline.

Even though crime may be on a downward trend, Allison and Richard Tanner, head of the University's public safety office, agree and stress that burglaries, theft, assault and violent crimes still do happen.

"The average student," Allison says, "if he is at the University four years, will be victimized at least once, usually twice."

The way students can protect themselves is to be aware of the possibility of theft and their own responsibilities.

"Number one, students have to be aware and take responsibility for their own property," Tanner says.

Tanner explains that naivete and carelessness contribute to the incidence of crime on campus and in the campus area. He points to an example of one student who left an expensive watch outside of the handball courts in Esslinger Hall while he was inside playing. "He was amazed someone stole it," Tanner says.

Allison stresses students play as big a role in crime prevention as the campus security and the Eugene police department.

"Students pay a tremendous amount of money to go to school here and they have the right to get an education free from the criminal element — that's why we're here," Allison says. "But it's a team effort... unless we get cooperation, an intricate part is missing."

The population base at the University is 20,000, which makes the campus and surrounding areas a target for crime, Tanner adds.

The types of crime that occur on campus range from minor thefts to violent crimes such as assault and rape. Allison says violent crimes are declining, but there has been a 57 percent increase in bicycle theft. Of all crimes at the University, burglary is growing the fastest, he adds.

Allison says only one attempted rape on campus was reported last year and that no "finalized" rapes were reported. The year before, nine rapes or attempted rapes were reported on campus.

Allison adds he has spoken with convicted rapists who have told him they come to the campus "looking," primarily because of the number of women on campus.

Allison says a woman should look at herself and be aware of "her own visible signals." The manner in which a woman carries herself may make her more susceptible to attack.

"If a woman displays confidence and self assurance, it increases the odds of not be-



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With bike thefts increasing over 57 percent in the last year, students need to be on guard against would-be thieves, according to Sgt. Rick Allison of the Eugene Police Department.

ing raped," he says.

Decreasing susceptibility to attack is one thing Allison stresses. In the instance of rape, he says there are several ways to better the odds. Travel routes and time of day should be a concern. For example, if a woman has a night class, he suggests staying away from dark, brushy areas since lights and people will discourage attackers, Allison says.

Other protective measures are sprays (some useful, some not, according to Allison), escort services provided by different campus groups, emergency call boxes located

around campus and noise.

According to Allison, the best thing to do in case of attack is to yell fire and keep yelling. A call of "rape" frightens people rather than gaining their assistance, he notes.

With the increase in burglary and theft comes a clear message from Allison and Tanner — students need to take responsibility to decrease the chance they will get victimized.

"There is a terrible amount of theft in the library and dorm rooms — and it's not forced entry," Tanner says.

Tanner notes a lot of

students are away from parents and home for the first time. He adds those students are not used to worrying about their security.

"The transition of home and parents to self-responsibility has to be impressed on their minds," Tanner says.

One effort being made to alleviate those problems is "Project Be Safe." Allison says elected students from residence halls and vice presidents in the Greek organizations are being trained to "allow them to be aware and

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